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ABSTRACT

The first 2 of the 12 publications reviewed in this annotated bibliography use Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs to address problems, respectively, of teaching composition and of motivating students by teaching them how to set goals, formulate goal-achievement strategies, and successfully implement their plans. Subsequent reports suggest ways of fostering student learning and motivation in elementary school classrooms, provide a review of a research synthesis on student discipline and motivation, explore key factors influencing degrees of motivation, and offer an administrator's guide for understanding student motivation and training teachers in motivation theories and practices. The remaining documents considered include a study guide of methods for motivating students in grades 7-9, a practitioner's guide to major concepts and theories of motivation, an article on the use of competition and public recognition as motivational tools, a description of motivation techniques at Medina (New York) Senior High School, a report emphasizing the importance of "intrinsic motivation," and an article offering strategies for motivating unmotivated students. (JBM)

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Number 73, February 1984

THE BEST OF ERIC ON EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

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Motivating Students for Excellence

1 **Boone, Beth, and Hill, Ada S.** "If Maslow Created a Composition Course: A New Look at Motivation in the Classroom." Paper presented at the combined Annual Meeting of the Secondary School English Conference and the Conference on English Education, Omaha, NE, March 1980. 19 pages. ED 191 053.

Abraham Maslow would not be pleased with Ms. Geraldine Grimgrader, a fictitious composition teacher created by the authors. Ms. Grimgrader gives cryptic and difficult assignments to her class, makes devastating remarks on their papers with red pens, and then grumbles about student motivation.

What if Maslow took Grimgrader's place, the authors ask in this entertaining yet substantive paper? How would he assess students and make assignments?

First, he would probably observe the students for a while and group them according to their positions on the needs hierarchy. In a class of thirty students, some might be at every level—basic, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. He might use a "response matrix" for "writing gripes" such as the one provided by the authors. This matrix contains twenty-five common gripes, such as "If we could work in groups and work together, I'd like to write more." Students are asked to choose the five gripes that most closely express their feelings; in doing so they identify their approximate needs levels.

Next, Maslow would give assignments based on students' levels. Those on the safety level "require definite structure and immediate reinforcement." Assignments for these students would be practical with a subject relative to their daily life. Students on the belonging level already feel secure and are reaching out for group acceptance. These students would be given group assignments so they could interact with others and get their approval.

Students on the self-esteem level are interested in recognition and rewards. Maslow would likely give them challenging, individual assignments with rewards appropriate to their accomplishment. Finally, students at or near a self-actualized stage would be given loosely structured assignments and would be instructed to follow their own judgments in developing a meaningful essay.

2 **Bradford, Ronald W.** "The Importance of Need and Success in Motivating Students to Achieve." *NASSP Bulletin*, 65, 441 (January 1981), pp. 32-36. EJ 238 668.

"In education, motivation is widely discussed from the viewpoint of the performance of motivated students versus the performance of unmotivated students, but only rarely from the perspective of how students are motivated and what motivates them." In this article, Bradford discusses these how's and what's of motivation using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a starting point.

"Motivation is caused by a need or desire that forms within a person." This need can be induced by external forces, or it can arise from internal psychological forces. Needless to say, intrinsic motivational forces have a much more profound effect than extrinsic forces.

Among the potentially strongest intrinsic motivational forces are those at or near the top of Maslow's hierarchy—the needs for self-esteem and for self-actualization. Even football coaches—who used to motivate via authoritarian intimidation—are seeing the light and are basing their motivational systems on "a positive self-image for their staffs and their players," says Bradford.

Educators can build students' self-esteems in a variety of ways, including "positive reinforcement, showing interest in them, and exhibiting a positive approach to life and life situations." More important, educators can teach students how to be successful by teaching them how to set goals, formulate strategies for achieving goals, and implementing their plans successfully.

3 **Brophy, Jere E.** *Fostering Student Learning and Motivation in the Elementary School Classroom.* Occasional Paper No. 51. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, Institute for Research on Teaching, April 1982. 66 pages. ED 216 008.

Motivation to learn may be defined as the "tendency to approach tasks with serious intent to do them carefully and get the benefit from them, and not just merely to complete them." Using this definition as background, Brophy here examines several approaches to student motivation and discusses related policy implications.

One approach to motivation is to build in students a "need for achievement." Brophy feels that achievement need can be overemphasized to the point where learning efficiency actually decreases. In addition, strong achievement need, with its emphasis on ends instead of means, "may detract from potential intrinsic motivation derivable from experiencing the processes of engaging in the task at hand."

Brophy also critiques approaches to motivation based on "reinforcement" models and attribution theory, and then goes on to describe what he believes to be the most promising approach to motivation: building intrinsic motivation to learn in students.

When intrinsically motivated, students value the possession and excercise of knowledge and skills, recognize the personal benefits of having such skills, and take pride in assignments completed using these skills.

To build intrinsic motivation, teachers should be taught to stress "the intrinsic value of task participation and steady gains in knowledge and skills rather than extrinsic rewards of sanctions." Brophy includes a table of guidelines for effective praise to illustrate the practical differences between extrinsic and intrinsic approaches.

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4 **Cotton, Kathleen, and Savard, William G.** *Student Discipline and Motivation. Research Synthesis.* Portland, Oregon: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, April 1982. 103 pages. ED 224 170.

"Classroom management which is characterized by a high degree of structure; clear and consistently enforced rules; and teacher awareness, monitoring, feedback and reinforcement has a positive effect on time-on-task and achievement, and is effective in preventing/reducing student misbehavior." This is one of the central conclusions Cotton and Savard derived from a review of thirty-one research documents on student motivation and discipline. Their findings in general support the intuitive notion of many practitioners that a "structured, interactive, no-nonsense environment" is best for enhancing student interest and achievement.

Some of the studies reviewed by the authors examined physical reward systems, in which material "prizes" were awarded for desired student behaviors. Such strategies do work in the short term, but the behavioral and motivational improvements produced "tend to be temporary," "occur only in settings where the reward system is in effect," and "undermine intrinsic motivation." On the other hand, social means of motivation such as teacher feedback, peer pressure, and recognition ceremonies tend to have lasting beneficial effects on student behavior and motivation.

A key to increasing student motivation is to provide students with the experience of success. This requires that students be given learning tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty, so they are both challenged and able to succeed. The positive feeling of success stimulates both achieving and delinquent students to strive for success again.

The authors' recommendations for administrative action follow directly from the conclusions above: Teachers should be trained, via inservice and preservice programs, regarding the values of structured classroom environments and teacher feedback and reinforcement. Superficial material reward systems should be discouraged, while social reinforcement systems should be promoted. Practices that enable students to experience academic and social success should be maintained and expanded. Included are twelve brief descriptions of effective programs for improving student discipline and motivation, and synopses of the research studies reviewed.

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5 **Farrell, John A.** "Motivation and Learning—It's as Easy as Riding a Bike." *NASSP Bulletin*, 66, 454 (May 1982), pp. 5-8. EJ 263 012.

"The more motivated we are, the easier we learn." But what factors influence our degree of motivation? In this brief article, Farrell explores this interesting subject and discusses other principles of learning based on the work of Madeline Hunter.

Motivation depends on the level of difficulty of the learning task. "If the learning is too difficult or too easy it is not appropriate and time will be wasted." Motivation also depends on the availability of feedback while learning and on the relationship of the "reward" of learning to the activity of learning. "The less direct the reward to the activity," Farrell notes, "the less motivated the student will be."

These and other factors influencing motivation are important because they can be controlled by teachers. In fact, says Farrell, teachers can use these factors to affect "the student's motivation to learn, the rate and degree of his or her learning, the retention of learning, and his or her ability to transfer the learning to new situations."

Many fine educators already intuitively employ good motivational techniques. But a training program can still be of benefit. A successful program of instructional improvement, says Farrell, would allow "the good instructor to bring to a conscious level that which he or she does intuitively in the instructional process" and would make "the not-so-good teacher aware of specific conditions that influence learning."

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6 **Harris, Lou Ann, and Smith, Sandra L.** *Understanding Student Motivation: A Management Guide for a Self-Instructional Module. Individualizing Staff Development.* California Community College Fund for Instructional Improvement, 1981. 14 pages. ED 211 532.

Teachers have greater contact with students than administrators and thus much greater potential for directly motivating students toward excellence. What, then, can administrators do to increase student motivation? For starters, they can help teachers understand the theories and strategies of student motivation. An excellent tool for such an undertaking is this short guidebook, which outlines a sequence of activities for learning about motivation. Though billed as a "self-instructional manual," this document can be equally useful as a guide to an inservice program.

The objectives of this module are stated as follows: to increase awareness of current research on motivation; increase knowledge of techniques for facilitating student motivation; provide opportunities and tools for analyzing present motivation practices; and provide the materials to implement improved motivation strategies.

The sequence of activities outlined for the module includes readings of two booklets on motivation, viewing filmstrips or listening to audiotapes on student motivation, taking quizzes on motivation theory and practice, taking inventories of present motivation strategies, planning new motivation strategies, and reading further material on motivation. Included are a bibliography of fifteen resources, two true/false quizzes, an evaluation sheet for the module, and information on obtaining the filmstrips and audiotapes.

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7 **Indiana State Department of Public Instruction.** *Methods for Motivation, Grades 7-9.* Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana State Department of Public Instruction, Division of Reading Effectiveness, August 1981. 14 pages. ED 210 647.

Many adolescents seem quite uninterested in learning basic academic skills, at least via traditional classroom approaches. The minds of adolescents, quite naturally, are preoccupied with the profound changes their bodies, psyches, and social relationships are going through. The idea proposed in this paper is to "tap into the adolescent energy stream almost 'on the sly'" and to use this energy to motivate the acquisition of academic skills and knowledge.

The interests of adolescents are directed in several diverse directions—they want to discover their sex roles in the culture, find vocations, and develop their value systems. They also are strongly interested in their changing relationships with their parents, relationships with members of the opposite sex, and their changing bodies.

Teachers can begin tapping these interests by first assessing the classroom situation. Specific problem behaviors can be noted,

and the reasons for these behaviors surmised. Next, the teacher can consider potential alternatives to existing behaviors and then plan some changes in the learning environment that will channel the intrinsic interests of problem students into academically productive channels.

The development of reading skills is particularly relevant to this kind of approach. "The reading interests of adolescents are going to be closely related to their emotional needs," so letting students choose their own books, or giving assignments whose content coincides with adolescent interests, can go far to motivate students to develop good reading skills. Numerous other suggestions—from using the Sunday comics to awarding popular paperback books as prizes—are included.

8 **Keller, John M.; Kelly, Edward F.; and Dodge, Bernard J.** *A Practitioner's Guide to Concepts and Measures of Motivation.* New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, Syracuse University. 1978. 199 pages. ED 169 953.

The administrator interested in monitoring and enhancing student motivation should understand both the major theories of motivation and the various tools for measuring student motivation. This document provides detailed instruction on both topics.

Currently, several theories of motivation are prevalent. The authors have chosen six major theories "that are particularly relevant to understanding motivation in education" and have devoted a chapter of this guidebook to each approach. Each chapter includes "a brief explanation of the concept, a summary of principles, and some suggestions for applying this knowledge, as well as descriptions of selected measurement instruments."

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For example, one of the major approaches is based on the concept of "curiosity and arousal-seeking." The authors provide a definition of curiosity based primarily on observable behaviors, and they differentiate between sensual and intellectual curiosity. Next, various findings on curiosity are briefly reviewed, for example: highly curious children "come from home environments that are structured and orderly (but not rigid), and inhabited by adults who serve as models of effectiveness and curiosity."

The authors then provide some down-to-earth advice on generating curiosity and motivation in the classroom, such as spicing lectures with novelty, surprise, and uncertainty. Suggestions are also given for using curiosity in individualized settings. Finally, the authors describe ten instruments that can be used to measure various aspects of curiosity.

The other five major approaches to motivation—achievement motivation, locus of control, anxiety, general academic motivation, and motivation and attitude—are discussed in a similarly comprehensive fashion.

9 **Sendor, Elizabeth.** "Harness Competition and Hoopla to Hook Kids on Academic Excellence." *American School Board Journal*, 169, 6 (June 1982), pp. 17-20. EJ 264 253.

Competition and public recognition, as any football coach knows, can motivate athletes to perform brilliantly. Today, these same motivating forces are being used to spur academically talented students to new levels of excellence, via organized "academic competitions." In this article, Sendor charts the "meteoric rise in the level of attention and excitement focused on those who excel academically," and then describes a dozen of the better-known academic competitions.

The "Olympics of the Mind" is organized like an athletic league. On the local level, students "audition to be on problem-solving teams, much as athletes try out for sports teams," says Sendor. "The tryouts include brainstorming (to help students learn to think quickly) and scrimmages (in which students solve problems individually and as a group)." The school team attacks any or all of the four official Olympics problems, and the solutions are judged at county, regional, and state tournaments. The finalists from around the country participate in the Olympics, held annually at Glassboro State College.

"It's Academic" is a local academic competition now in existence in Washington, D.C., and other Eastern cities. Eighty-one schools in the Washington area choose three-member teams, which compete three at a time on a weekly television program. Winners of the weekly events participate in a year-end tournament. Winning schools receive scholarships, which they can award to the student of their choice.

Other national, international, and local competitions reviewed by Sendor include the National Spelling Bee, the Future Problem-Solving Bowl, the U.S. Skill Olympics, the International Mathematical Olympiad, and the Westinghouse Science Talent Search.

10 **Snyder, Frederick E.** "Building an Atmosphere of Academic Excellence." *NASSP Bulletin*, 62, 417 (April 1978), pp. 42-46. EJ 175 602.

"How do we motivate students to do their best?" In answer to this rhetorical question, Snyder—the principal of Medina (New York) Senior High School—describes a variety of motivation techniques used in his school.

Students who achieve an 87 percent average or better receive a "Merit Pass," entitling them "to report to an unsupervised study hall, supervised study hall, or the library without a regular corridor pass." Students achieving 93 percent or better receive an "Honor Pass," which entitles them to even more freedom.

Medina High also recognizes a "Student-of-the-Month." Snyder believes that rewards for excellence should be granted "in a wide range of endeavors so that the percentage of students motivated is high." Thus, students of the month are chosen from several areas, including academics, athletics, music, art, and vocational education.

Students achieving recognition by the National Honor Society attend an induction ceremony to which parents and the public are invited. Additional recognition is given by taking the students out to dinner on the day of induction and publicizing their accomplishments in local newspapers.

In addition to these and other forms of public recognition for excellence, Snyder emphasizes the curriculum and student discipline as tools for motivating students. Faculty members should "publish requirements and standards of excellence for all courses." Interesting elective courses with sound educational content should be offered, and discipline should be "swift, firm, and fair."

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11 **Stipek, Deborah J.** *Motivating Students to Learn: A Lifelong Perspective.* Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Excellence in Education, July 1982. 56 pages. ED 227 111.

Most discussions of student motivation in the educational literature work within the assumptions of the "reinforcement model of motivation." "In its simplest form," says Stipek, "this model assumes that the frequency of a desired behavior increases if an individual is rewarded for the behavior and the frequency of undesired behavior decreases if the individual is punished for it." In this excellent critique, Stipek steps out of the confines of the reinforcement model and examines the issue of student motivation from the viewpoint of mastery learning. Her arguments against the grading system and its related "technologies" provide a valuable perspective on the problem of student motivation.

The cornerstone of Stipek's approach is the concept of "intrinsic motivation." In this view, such human behaviors as exploration, curiosity, and attempts at mastery are expressions of an innate "need" to feel competent. Achieving mastery of a learning task is naturally reinforcing because it stimulates feelings of competence.

The current educational system assumes that motivation stems from the application of external rewards—such as good grades—and thus ignores the powerful motivational forces inherent in the human psyche. As a result, nearly all external rewards accrue to students who are already successful within the grading system, a case of the "rich" getting richer.

To enhance the motivation and success of all students, Stipek recommends that schools evaluate students on a mastery basis, minimize normative public evidence of individual students' performances, consider errors a normal aspect of skill acquisition, and provide opportunities for all students to demonstrate competence and achieve success at appropriate levels. A lengthy bibliography is appended.

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12 **Webb, Clark D., and Baird, J. Hugh.** "Three Strategies for Motivating Pupils." *Clearing House*, 54, 1 (September 1980), pp. 27-29. EJ 231 410.

Everyone loves a motivated student. But how do you help unmotivated students become motivated? In this article, Webb and Baird outline three techniques based on norm setting, curiosity, and inquiry.

Unmotivated students are often "irresponsible learners." Such students can be helped to take responsibility for their own learning by using the technique of "norm setting." Norm setting is a cooperative decision-making process between student and teacher that seeks to establish norms of behavior for the classroom. Cooperatively developed norms give students a sense of ownership in the classroom and define behavioral goals for irresponsible learners.

Curiosity is a well-known motivator, and it can be piqued most easily with paradox. "Paradox is the appearance of contradiction within a phenomenon or a statement." Incongruity leads to active questioning, which is prerequisite to deep learning. The authors present numerous examples of how paradox can be used in various subject areas.

Similar to arousing curiosity is the technique of stimulating the framing of questions about a topic. "You cannot give an answer to someone who has not asked the question," Webb and Baird Stress, yet that is exactly what teachers often do when they lecture without stimulating student questions. "Simply asking a question in class does not mean that the question is an interrogative in the pupils' minds."

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